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The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe provides a comprehensive overview of the gender rules encountered in Europe in the period between approximately 500 and 1500 C.E. The essays collected in this volume speak to interpretative challenges common to all fields of women's and gender history - that is, how best to uncover the experiences of ordinary people from archives formed mainly by and about elite males, and how to combine social histories of lived experiences with cultural histories of gendered discourses and identities. The collection focuses on Western Europe in the Middle Ages but offers some consideration of medieval Islam and Byzantium.

The *Handbook* is structured into seven sections: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim thought; law in theory and practice; domestic life and material culture; labour, land, and economy; bodies and sexualities; gender and holiness; and the interplay of continuity and change throughout the medieval period. It contains material from some of the foremost scholars in this field, and it not only serves as the major reference text in medieval and gender studies, but also provides an agenda for future new research.



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Editorial Review

Review

a monumental undertaking. It has to be stated straight away, though, that this book is also an intellectually monumental and much-needed project that brings together the latest scholarship and thinking on women and gender studies... Bennett and Karras are to be congratulated on establishing a handbook that brings together an exciting range of the most up-to-date research on gender. Gabriele Neher, *History Today* Students will appreciate the Handbook for its helpful introductions, while more advanced readers and specialists in the field will find the new interpretations, provocative thinking and illustrative material inspiring. The volume ought to be on everyone's bookshelf or, in electronic form, bookmarked on one's computer. The editors should be congratulated on having gathered together the very best in current scholarship. Elisabeth Van Houts, *English Historical Review*

About the Author

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Judith M. Bennett teaches women's history and medieval history at the University of Southern California. She is the author of a number of books and articles on medieval women and on the feminist practice of history, as well as a popular textbook on medieval European history.

Ruth Mazo Karras teaches history at the University of Minnesota. She is the author of five books and numerous articles in medieval history and the history of gender and sexuality. She is a co-editor of the journal *Gender and History*, General Editor of the Middle Ages Series at the University of Pennsylvania Press, and a former president of the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians.

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